

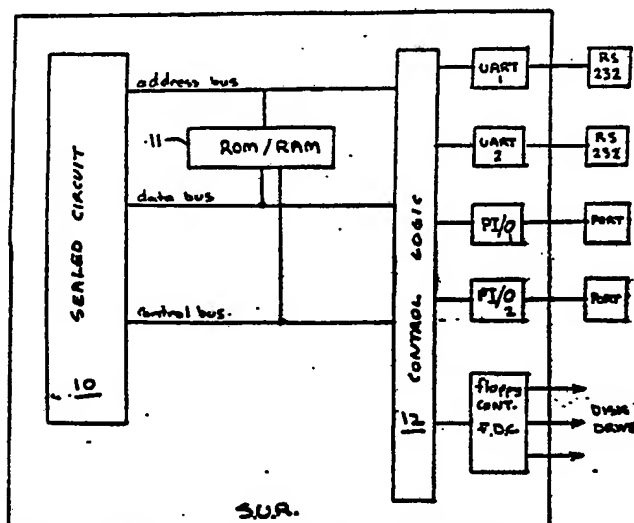
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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁴ : G06F 11/30, 11/34	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 85/ 03584 (43) International Publication Date: 15 August 1985 (15.08.85)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/AU85/00016 (22) International Filing Date: 4 February 1985 (04.02.85) (31) Priority Application Numbers: PG 3451 PG 7707 (32) Priority Dates: 3 February 1984 (03.02.84) 19 October 1984 (19.10.84) (33) Priority Country: AU (71)(72) Applicant and Inventor: GUIGNARD, Paul [CH/AU]; 33 Davis Street, Kew, VIC 3101 (AU). (74) Agent: CLEMENT HACK & CO.; 140 William Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000 (AU). (81) Designated States: AT (European patent), AU, BE (European patent), BR, CH (European patent), DE (European patent), DK, FI, FR (European patent), GB (European patent), JP, KR, LU (European patent), NL (European patent), NO, SE (European patent), US.		Published With international search report.

(54) Title: SECURITY AND USAGE MONITORING



(57) Abstract

A method and apparatus where a device PC is controlled, so that when instructions, information or material to be used in the PC is provided to the PC, and where the instructions, information or material has at least one key code associated therewith, the PC cannot operate until the key code is matched with a key code held in a memory in a security and usage register SUR attached to the PC and wherein following a match being made, a usage register in the SUR is incremented. Eventually the usage register in the SUR can be inspected so that a charge, for example, can be made relating to the use of the instructions, information or material used. The invention has particular although not exclusive application in the computer arts where a programme or data cannot run in the computer until the key codes are matched and eventually a usage register incremented. By this means it is possible to substantially eradicate the unauthorized and/or unaccounted use of programs or data or materials.